WORKS IN PROGRESS

VOLUME 12, NUMBER 3 | THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION | JULY 2001

Olympia Free Garden: The adventure continues

Natalie Nicklett

For all who have not seen or heard, city bulldozers leveled the marvelous Olympia Free Garden at Harrison and Division on May 2nd, the day after it was installed.

This despicable act was committed by the city of Olympia for fear of the "space becoming a sight of further protest". Despite the destruction, life has persevered. The free garden now lives on at a nearby location, and a group of Moms, Greens, and Anarchists are pursuing a community determination of the future of the lot. Following is a description of a forum planned to discuss the future of the May day Free garden sight at Harrison and Division, and a list of events going on at the new Olympia Free Garden.

Walkable Westside:

All people who live, work, or play in the Westside are invited. Please come on time. *Where do we want to go? What are we going to have to do to get there?*

Gloria Dei Lutheran church
1515 Harrison Ave
Thursday, July 26th 7:00-8:30
(reception at 6:30 to eat refreshments, look at Westside vision artwork, and to talk with eachother)

This forum will use the sight at Harrison and Division as a focus to see how we as a community can make our westside neighborhood what we want it to be. The schedule includes a panel discussion, small group discussion, larger group discussion, and opportunities for folks to get involved.

The panel will include members from the Olympia city government, urban activists, a community designer, representatives from neighborhood associations, and a land developer. The city says in their comprehensive plan that they will work toward creating a walkable westside. This is your chance to ask them how handing out permits for gas stations takes the landscape to this goal. Find out how the city government appropriates park moneys, who has knowledge and power in making these decisions, how the city government solicits public input, and tell them how effective these means are. Find out who has the resources to implement decisions about how space is used, and find out how this differs from other cities. Learn ways to make and implement decisions about land use outside of the city bureaucracy. Ask whatever you want to know. Say what you want to say.

After the panel discussion, we will break up into facilitated small groups. In these groups we will all get a chance to talk about what we want to see on the westside and on this lot, what we value in our community, and what we have time and motivation to do in order to get to reach our goals. These groups will present to the entire group. Folks will get a chance to sign up for action groups which will implement the visions that come out of the meeting.

The forum is sponsored by the South Sound Greens and Moms for a Walkable Westside.

Neighborhood art parties:

All are encouraged to host small art parties with friends and nieghbors before the forum in order to create Westside vision artwork. Artwork will be shared and viewed at the reception preceding the July 26th forum. For more information, look at the flyer at the Westside food coop, or contact Steve Hughes.

The Free Garden lives on, questions and answers:

How did this garden get started?

In the rubble created when the city bulldozed the May Day garden at Harrison and division the people who live at 110 division offered up their sidelot as a community garden.

Where is this new community garden?

The new Olympia Free Garden is a hop, skip and a jump from the old location at Harrison and Division. The new location is the empty lot to the north of 110 NW Division.

What is already at the garden?

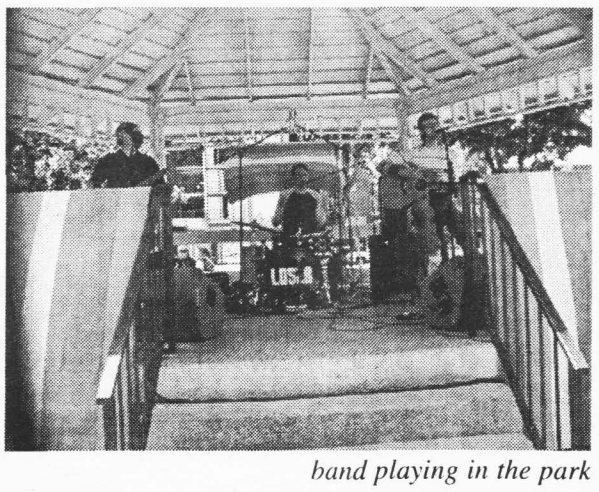
Sunflowers, potatoes, lettuce, toma-

(Continued page 15)

Scenes From Olympia's Pride Day

people in the park

tabling in the park



band playing in the park

City of Olympia To Fund Tenants Union

by Pat Tassoni

The Olympia City Council unanimously voted on June 19th to award the Thurston County Tenants Union $20,000: $10,000 from the federal Community Development Block Grant program and committed another $10,000 from another source. The money will become available in 2002. This money will go towards making the TCTU project a stable one by creating a part-time position to serve the 42% of Olympia residents who are renters!

The council was impressed by the number of emails they got regarding the Tenants Union work over the past year. Every tenant in Olympia owes those tenants a word of thanks for their participation in this regard. Since last year Tenant Union volunteers have talked with over 1000 renters about their rights, (they have also educated a couple of dozen of landlords as to what it means to be a good landlord). The Thurston County Tenants Union answers questions and distributes written materials to tenants including copies of local and state laws, sample letters, and eviction, deposit and repair packets; information for tenants who live in housing subsidized through the Section 8 program as well as tenants who live in mobile home parks.

The Tenants Union is gearing up to approach other govenment bodies for funding so their tenant-residents don't get left without access to our service. Please consider plugging into the organization in some way by joining the Policy Board, volunteering on the hotline, or getting on the email list to send important emails to important people. You are especially invited to participate in this regard if you live outside the City of Olympia. Here is another campaign the Tenants Union is looking at:

Non-Discrimination — Laws were established to protect classes of people from unfair treatment. See our enclosed brochure on Fair Housing. These laws often times lag behind community desires. For instance, the Cities of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater (in addition to cities all across the country) have passed into law protections based on Sexual Orientation. The county itself has no non-discrimination law, but is currently considering an enforceable ordinance that would include Sexual Orientation. The Thurston County Tenants Union has proposed the County ordinance include protections against low-income renters who participate in the federal housing subsidy program like Tumwater, Seattle, King County and other. Many disabled persons and seniors have a housing subsidy. No one should be denied housing because of who they are or that they participate in a government program. This issue will be coming to a vote before the County Commissioners in late summer or fall.

If you have any questions about your rights as a tenant or want more information about the Tenants Union stop by at 203 E. 4th Ave #412 or call (360) 943-3036.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

Works In Progress is a community newspaper sponsored by the Thurston County Rainbow Coalition. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Rainbow Coalition or the Workers In Progress and are solely those of the authors.

Submissions:

Correspondence, articles, art, and photographs are always welcome. Please, when possible, put articles on a 3.5" IBM-compatible disk (text preferred) or via e-mail. Artwork and photos should be camera-ready/ black & white.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number.

Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress, it's because you aren't writing about it! Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)

Send submissions to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295, wip@ olywa.net

Back Issues:

Get your catalog of indexed WIPs below. Some back issues are available in the Olympia Timberland Library. WIP is being archived on microfilm by the UW Library.

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Tristan Baurick	Jerome Johnson
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Chelsea Chase	Sarah Maden
Sebastian Chase	Wendy Ortiz
Tom Chenhall	Hali Panneton
Renee Cruickshank	Jeff Sowers
Megan Davis	Sylvia Smith
Frank Hoffman	Pat Tassoni
Teresa Jennings	Alice Zillah

Mission Statement:

"Our aim is to confront injustice and encourage a participatory democracy based on economic, social, and environmental justice. Works In Progress is dedicated to providing a voice for those most affected by the exclusionary and unfair practices that seek to silence the oppressed."

Anti-Discrimination Clause:

We will collectively endeavor to be sensitive and respectful to all those oppressed in this society, and their issues. However, if and when we should make a mistake in this regard, we expect to acknowledge it and to express regret for injury or insult given.

Governing Tool:

The following statement will become part of the Editorial Policy and will be the governing tool for the Anti-Discrimination Clause: *WIP will make every effort to work with the contributor of material considered by WIP to be offensive in order to reach a mutually agreed upon resolution, but WIP reserves the right as a last resort to edit or not print submitted material.*

Letters, briefs, etc.

Home Rule Forum

July 10, 2001
Grace Community Covenant Church
5501 Wiggins Rd SE
6 – 9 PM

Participants Steve Lundin and Gary Lowe will discuss Home Rule – What is it? Why pursue it for Thurston County? How does it happen? How are freeholders selected? Former Freeholders ? & ? will share perceptions of the process. What can be done to improve the chance of success. Jeff Sowers, Home Rule Coalition will report on the current effort.

Ever Really Hate Your Job Or Boss?

Have you ever had a job that was just the worst? Ever had a boss that was the biggest sleezebag under the sun? What about those customers that think you are their personal slave or the landlord who never intended on giving you back any of your security deposit?

Well, I am collecting you stories. How did you deal with those problems? Did you use any direct action tactics? Organize a union? Call a state agency? or did you and your friends just take matters into your own hands? Have you stolen from places you worked? Monkeywrenched? Framed your boss or asshole co-worker?

All submissions should be annonymous. Any emails should come come from false accounts. All submissions may be used in a publishable collection or ongoing article though confidentiality will be maintained. Just remember, I can't give out what you don't give me, so be aware of where emails originate from as well. Please send your many experiences to erricco@hotmail.com or to Eric Chase c/o OLYWOBS, PO box 2775 Olympia WA 98507.

Buy a house for social justice!

House for Sale by Owner.
1716 Thurston Ave NE.

This sweet 1920's Craftsman style house is on a large double lot on the Eastside. The house has two bedrooms and a bath, PLUS a half story loft and a small basement, a back yard and patio, and a garage. The double lot is great for gardening and kids, and has lots of fruit trees and is fully fenced. Four percent of the proceeds go to benefit youth and homeless outreach. $120,000. Stop by or give Long Hair David a call at 791-2241.

Buy a cool car and donate to social justice!

1960 Cherry Red Valiant for sale. Runs Fine. Needs a lil TLC. 2500 bucks/ obo. 200 bucks donated to the Emma Goldman Youth Homeless Outreach Project. Amy 705-1236.

PFLAG Olympia

Sunday, July 8, 2-4 p.m.
the Gathering Place room
First United Methodist Church
1224 Legion Way SE

We will have a presentation by a member of the Straight Spouse Network, an international organization of heterosexual spouses or partners of gay,

(Continued page 15)

WIP Schedule

Submission Deadline:
Friday, July 19th

Proofreading Meeting
Monday, July 23rd
6:30pm at Olympia Timberland Library
Everyone Welcome!

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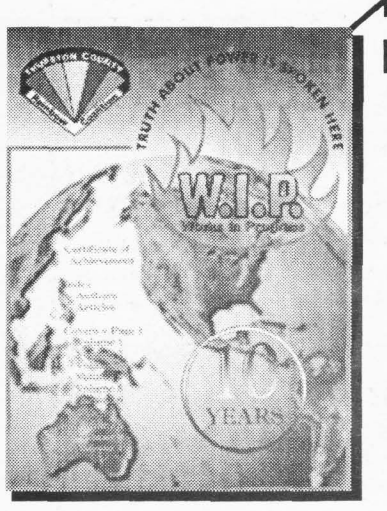
☐ Catalog/Index Listing...$1; back issues...$1/each (while supplies last)



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WIP WORKS IN PROGRESS

JULY 2001

CIA's Nazi War Criminals...

...as if we're surprised

Suspected Nazi war criminal, General Reinhard Gehlen, created the "Gehlen Org", an intelligence organization consisting of 1000s of Nazis that provided information to the CIA. Some of his infamous employees were:

→ **Alois Brunner** – Adolf Eichmann's right-hand man responsible for sending some 140,000 European Jews to the gas chambers. The children, he claimed, were "future terrorists"

→ **Emil Augsburg** – Intellectual leader of the Wannsee Institute involved in the planning of the Final Solution. Wanted in Poland for war crimes, he worked for the US Army's Counterintelligence Corps (CIC) 1947-8.

→ **Klaus Barbie** – A dedicated sadist, the Butcher of Lyon was responsible for the torture and death of more than 26,000 men, women and children.

→ **Wilhelm Krichbaum** – Head of the Counter Intelligence Police of the Wehrmacht in Nazi Germany and a district chief within the Gehlen organization

→ **Franz Six** – Former Einsatzkommando. He had also headed the Ideological Research branch of the RSHA, writing about Jews and Freemasons as enemies of the Third Reich.

→ **Guido Zimmer** – Tracked down Jews in Italy beginning in 1943; he was involved both with war crimes and espionage.

Sources: *San Francisco Bay Guardian*, 5.7.01; and the National Archives and Records Administration; The Bolivia Web

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 **1999**: US Supreme Court bars police stops for minor infractions solely for the purpose to check out suspected criminal activity	**2** **1979**: Supreme Court upholds most aspects of the Boldt Decision **1999**: OR: Gap between rich/poor growing; kids are poorest residents	**3** **1964**: Civil Rights Act is signed into law **2000**: AP poll shows voters split on whether Al Gore or George W. Bush is more honest	**4** **1999**: GW defends military record; claims no preferential treatment **2000**: Puget Sound Energy wants 16.7% natural gas price increase	**5** **2000**: Clinton reports Israeli-Palestinian agreement to talk **2000**: Initiative to ban leg-hold traps filed w/ 252,000 signatures	**6** **2000**: Report in JAMA claims women are surviving heart attacks at same rate as men though treated somewhat less aggressively	**7** **2000**: Tre Arrow climb up upon a ledge of the US Forest Service Bldg to protest logging in the Eagle Creek area near Mt Hood
8 **1876**: S.C. White terrorists attack Black Republicans in Hamburg, **1835**: Liberty Bell cracks during the funeral of John Marshal	**9** **1995**: French commandos storm Rainbow Warrior II to prevent protesters from landing on S Pacific atoll to be used for nuclear tests	**10** **1997**: House votes to end NEA funding **2000**: US Census Bureau projects life expectancy in Africa will drop to 30 in ten years	**11** **2000**: Washington state Parks signs five-year contract with Coke to provide soft drink vending machines in state parks	**12** **2000**: DSHS takes blame for failing to protect toddler killed by her mother **2000**: 6 parking meters taped shut by food bank	**13** **2000**: Democrats decide to delay lawsuit demanding the state end its open primary **2000**: Bradley endorses Al Gore	**14** **2000**: Miami jury awards $145 billion to 100,000s of Florida smokers; the tobacco companies immediately vowed to appeal
15 **1913**: White workers attack Japanese railway laborers in Steamboat Springs **1996**: Dow Jones drops 161 points.	**16** **2000**: City of Olympia settles wrongful arrest claim for arresting Mike Pelly while he was protesting the bombing of Bosnia	**17** **2000**: Georgia-Pacific becomes world's largest tissue company **2000**: Tre Arrow ends protest, comes down from ledge in Portland	**18** **2000**: Superior Court judge rules North Thurston violated free speech by expelling student for Web site mocking vice principal	**19** **1919**: Beginning of 4 day long race riot in Washington, D.C. triggered by raids on black residential areas by white soldiers	**20** **2000**: The historic Evergreen Ballroom burns to the ground; Charlie Parker, James Brown Hank Williams Jr. and others had played there	**21** **1995**: Opponents of property-rights I-164 file signatures to put measure on ballot and prevent it from becoming law in a few days
22 **1915**: Germany uses poison gas: chlorine **1998**: An international research team has produced three generations of cloned mice	**23** **1900**: Canada closes border to paupers **1996**: Olympia City Council agrees to have a public hearing on sidewalk sitting ban	**24** **2000**: Bush selects Cheney as his running mate **2000**: Lowry announces bid for state lands commissioner	**25** **2000**: Israeli/Palestinian peace talks collapse **2000**: Three possibly poisonous strains of blue-green algae found in Long Lake	**26** **1908**: Salvadore Allende born **1998**: AT&T and British Telecommunications announce merger of international assets	**27** **2000**: DSHS drops plan for sex-offender facility in Johnson Point area **2000**: WA Supreme Court: inmates have no right to pub. education	**28** **1917**: 10,000 African-Americans march down 5th Avenue, New York, in silent parade protesting lynchings and racial indignities
29 **1999**: WA Supreme Court rules churches can be liable for failing to protect children from sexual abuse by church officials	**30** **2000**: 18 workers sickened while building incinerator accuse Army of hiding nerve and mustard agents leaks at Umatilla Depot	**31** **1940**: Adolf Hitler bans the practicing of Christian Science throughout Germany **2000**: GOP 37th national convention begins				

One of the consequences of the CIA's ghoulish alliance with the Org is evident today in a resurgent fascist movement in Europe that can trace its ideological lineage back to Hitler's Reich through Gehlen operatives who collaborated with US intelligence.

Martin A. Lee

Up Front

Reader Response: Write Stuff, Jesse Jr., the Greens & the Mariners

Jerome Johnson

Every so often, I like to respond to feedback and questions from readers. Not only is it fun, it makes the column a little more interactive. So...are ya comfy? Got yer favorite beverage, snack, and music? Hey ho, let's go!

How do you find things to write about, and what's your writing process?

Easy—to quote Bill Buckley (just this once, with a smile): "The world irritates me." Especially with that Texass twerp in the White House! As long there is bigotry, hate, oppression, sickness, poverty, and the Efforts of the Forces of Good, I'll always have something to write about.

Stylistically, I've been blessed with great teachers—Phil Donahue, Charlayne Hunter-Gault, TESC's Peta Henderson, Nancy Allen & Gail Tremblay, Len Pitts, Maureen Dowd, Howard Zinn and Mike Royko, to name a few. Some have taught me from a distance via their work, others more directly. The process itself is pretty basic. After I finish one column, I just watch the news and the world around me. By the third week I've got a pretty good idea of my topic, so I think about it for another week or so before writing. These days I use a computer, something called a KDS Delux. My best time to write is usually between 2 and 6am. Then I email to my august editor, and woe betide me if I'm late—although he's a pretty understanding guy IF my reasons are good (smiling).

What do you think of Jesse Jackson, Jr.?

Well, he sounds good. I just read an interview in "The Progressive" (thanks, Ms. E.!)and I was interested to hear his comments about Ralph Nader, both during the campaign and recently. Yet, good as he sounds, I don't know that Junior would be a viable presidential candidate. Certainly not in 2004—getting rid of Dubya is MUCH too critical a priority to waste on extremely risky experiments, as Mondale & Ferraro learned back in '84 when they were trying to beat the Emperor Reagan, and lost in one of the biggest landslides in US history. Junior should stop making excuses for his father. You can't excuse the inexcusable, and now the very name carries too much baggage. It's not Junior's fault, but it is his problem.

It's the first time I've ever belonged to a political party, and it's interesting to see how all that political science I learned in school operates in the Real World.

Moreover, I don't think Jesse Jr. could carry the South, even if Georgia Governor Zell Miller was his running mate. Instead, he should challenge the Republican who holds Mosley-Braun's old Senate seat and defeat him. (Can't recall the new senator's name now). If Junior can't do that, he should forget about higher elective office for the time being, unless it's a run for Illinois governor. Even that would be hard.

The fact is, the majority of the Americans are just not ready for a black president yet. If they couldn't handle the conservative Colin Powell, there's no way they'll accept Jesse Jr. He should read the advice he gave Nader and use it himself.

Too bad, really. Imagine Maxine Waters as US Attorney General!

Is it true you're a member of the Green Party?

Absolutely yes! I joined earlier this year. Having a great time when I'm not working my ass off. It's the first time I've ever belonged to a political party, and it's interesting to see how all that political science I learned in school operates in the Real World. Check out the local website at southsoundgreens.org (you're welcome, Mr. C.).

What about the Mariners this year? (Disclaimer: for a few minutes I'll set aside my knowledge of their foreign corporate owners & corporate sponsors, etc).

How 'BOUT those M's!! Let me break a stereotype right now—a lot of people think progressives aren't sports fans. Well, this one is—since I was a kid. I grew up watching baseball (Bob Gibson, Roberto Clemente) and Muhammad Ali. Hell, Ali and Martin Luther King were my boyhood heroes. And in 1974, I saw Hank Aaron break Ruth's record. So far—despite all the racist hype and wishful thinking about Mark McGwire—Aaron's record 755 home runs HAS NEVER BEEN BROKEN.

I'm really excited about the Mariners this year. Overall, I think it's even better than the '95 Playoff Season. That's because the Mariners have remembered the true spirit of sport, and baseball especially: It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game. And the Mariners have worked the fundamentals and played very well. The "loss" of Griffey and A-Rod mean that every player must play well, and use teamwork. "Small ball"—scoring on line drives and base running instead of depending on home runs, stronger defense and bullpen instead of relying solely on starting pitchers—has really made the difference. There's a real team spirit, and it's showing on the field.

At least once a week, I have my "last laugh" on Griffey and A-Rod. Like spoiled brats, they whined about money and being on a "winning team." Instead of working to make the Mariners a winning team so everyone could make money, they just sulked and hurt morale. Well, noe Griffey's spent most of the season on the Reds' disabled list and A-Rod is on the losingest team in the league. They got their justice, and we're sure enjoying the peace from their whining! I'm going to a game at The Safe this summer. Fellow progressives, fear not—whatever I spend into Safeco's corporate coffers, I'll double it and send the check to Morris Dees.

In Korea, shamans bless the land where the World Cup will be held.

In Jerusalem, Israelis and Palestinians join together to celebrate Gay/Lesbian Pride.

In Washington D.C., the US House rebuffs Dubya's plan to drill for oil and gas off the Florida coast.

And in Olympia, 'neath the summer sun, 4th Ave. bridge repairs continue apace.

Praise the Child, Honor the Mother

by Frank Hoffman

When Congress "reformed" public assistance laws a few years ago, it justified the radical changes as ways to promote independence for the poor. That's what they said, the rich and middle class white men writing the law, called the Personal Reponsibility Act of 1996. Most of these low income people in the United States are women and children. This "reform," became instead another way of promoting the dependence of women on rich and middle class white men, who are of course, most of the owners of the low wage businesses the women are being forced to work for as part of this "reform".

Why would elected representatives from both major political parties want to discipline or punish women and our children? What did they do wrong? The children just showed up after floating around for 9 months. Their mothers gain our attention because they are poor and need help - from us, that societal, collective, us. The government, since 1996, calls that help Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF.) Notice the Protestant/ Puritanical titles of these bills.

No infant formed the intention to come among us. That they join us here is perhaps itself alone cause for rejoicing and praise. Regardless of who they are and who they become. And regardless of the economic condition of their parents. If a mother chooses to birth a child, perhaps we should praise the child and honor the mother.

Praise the child because, as Blake said, Life delights in life. Maybe the enterprise of life, that which is born and grows, maybe blossoms, then dies, has always been tricky, ambiguous and awesome. The meanings of it all, unclear.

Maybe there have always been people, or call them forces, that revere life, praise it, exult in it, in all its forms, from nematodes to eagles, from grasses to redwoods. Who see water, the sun and the moon as true blessings. And the consciousness of humans as a mirror to those blessings.

And it seems maybe there have always been people who see humans as apart from those blessings, in charge of them somehow. Who distrust any kind of joyfulness. Who seem to be in a rush toward death. Who believe in suffering, and based on that belief, think they can determine behavior that is right and behavior that is wrong and punishable. Creation seems to frighten them.

Honor the mother. The person, in our society, who still nurtures this creation, the child, who raises it among us, who is the primary care giver. Who accepts responsibility for the child, even if the father doesn't. Who will endure poverty for the child. And who, in that need, turns to the rest of us hoping for generosity and support.

When we praise the child and honor the mother, we promote the life of our species, among all the other living things. (And maybe there is a cosmic dance, everything in motion, and everything,then, is alive.) Why would we do anything else? Let those who choose to suffer, suffer themselves, and leave the rest of us alone.

What does it mean if a society, like ours, honors the rich and despises the poor? What does it mean if these "poor" are primarily children and their mothers?

If capitalism requires the poverty of our children, then we must doom capitalism. If it can be changed to praise the child and honor the mother, now is the time. If we keep blaming the poor, our children, for their poverty, and exalting the rich, we will create a cynicism and alienation that will devastate us, either sooner or later. Our indifference will not protect us. Our love for life, and the future of life, can show us what we must do. This love does not require stupidity. It may require a proper and inclusive reverence.

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Imagine a Revolution

County Home Rule Charter Opens Door to Significant Social Change

Francis Wilson

Imagine a political revolution in Thurston County where the citizens rise up and "dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another," and "institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness." In other words, dissolve the existing government and establish another one in its place. This is exactly what the home rule charter effort intends to do.

It is called a political revolution. In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson felt that a "decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation." What, then, are the reasons for calling for a political revolution in Thurston County?

Well, to be honest, people involved in the charter effort have a lot of different reasons for wanting to change county government, and not all of them are very exciting. But I can tell you why I think we need a county political revolution.

Corporations rule the world, but so to does a local power elite control local politics, with the same result: Government policies that put profits over people. The local power elite, often referred to as the "urban growth machine," consists of an alliance of business interests that share a common interest in intensifying land use, and maximizing development. The result is local government policies that put the profits of these elites before the well being of the community. Local government spends literally millions of taxpayer dollars each year to subsidize development. Thus, not only is the environment being gobbled up in endless urban sprawl, asphalt plants, cell towers, sludge factories, housing developments, strip malls, etc, we pay millions to encourage this to happen as fast as possible, simply because a small group of people (about ½ of 1% of the population) profits by it. Here in Thurston County the urban growth machine is represented by such groups as the Economic Development Council, the Master Builders, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Now, if we can't figure out how to overthrow the power elite and democratize society locally, how are we ever going to do it nationally or globally? Grassroots democracy must begin at the grassroots. If the state did not allow us to reorganize ourselves politically at the local level, then we would have no option but to overthrow the oppressive state government just to free ourselves up to act. But, the fact is, we do have this power with home rule. Article 11, section 4 of the Washington State Constitution establishes the right of counties to adopt, by a voting majority, their own charters and establish their own form of county government.

Some might say that the problem is not with the political system, but with the people. If only the people would get of their asses and DO SOMETHING!, then things could change. While this is true, it ignores the fact that the political systems we have are, by design (through a long history of concerted effort), constituted so as to allow the power elite to easily dominate them (campaign finance system, two party system, exclusive reliance on representation that is distant from the people, professionalization of politics, etc.). The result is government that is dominated by a power elite in community after community. Thus, the problem does not only, or even primarily, reside in the nature of the people, but in the structure of the political systems that are in place. So we can gripe about how apathetic the people are, and wait for economic collapse to move them into increased political action, or we can, in the words of Rousseau, "take people as they are," and set about the task of building democratic political systems that work for us, rather than the power elite.

What, then, are the reasons for calling for a political revolution in Thurston County?

How can we restructure our local political systems so that they are not so easily dominated and manipulated by a powerful few? I don't think there are any simple or single answers, but there are a lot of good ideas worth trying. Together, these would radically transform the political system. As we work to implement existing ideas, we will learn from our experience, and people will come up with new, even better ideas. In this manner, which is the manner of all human achievement, we will build a true grassroots democracy.

Following are a list of some current noteworthy ideas, all of which could be instituted within the framework of a county home rule charter.

Proportional Representation

"There is a broad range of PR systems. Some are based on voting for political parties; others for candidates. Some allow very small groupings of voters to win seats; others require higher thresholds of support to win representation. All promote more accurate, balanced representation of the spectrum of political opinion in a given electorate." (Center for Voting and Democracy)

Instant run-off voting

"IRV corrects the defects in plurality elections and two-round runoff elections, the two most widely used voting systems in the country." " It allows all voters to vote for their favorite candidate without fear of helping elect their least favorite candidate." If your first choice does not win, your vote will go to your second choice candidate. IRV would help third parties gain a greater voice.

Direct Democracy

DD envisions the electorate directly participating in initiating and deciding all major policy issues through an improved version of the initiative system, which includes more provisions for face-to-face neighborhood discussion, citizen education, and balanced campaigning. The role of the representative is to facilitate and carry out community decisions.

Neighborhood Government

This idea, which is complementary to DD, envisions devolving much of centralized county and city power into neighborhood associations that are directly self-governed through neighborhood assemblies/meetings. Many decisions now made at the county level, for example zoning, development regulations, tax rates, etc. would be made by neighborhood residents at neighborhood meetings. Neighborhoods would also elect an executive council to carry out neighborhood decisions, and liaison with other neighborhoods and levels of government. The county becomes a federation of neighborhoods.

There are many other possibilities, such as establishing a public campaign financing system, a citizens police review board, term limits, etc.

Let's be realistic: You know and I know that there is no way most of these ideas are going to find their way into an initial county charter. We have to think incrementally. The public is not ready to take large, radical steps. But they are ready to take smaller, incremental steps toward greater democracy. There is enough frustration with government among the voting majority to provide some impetus toward changing the structure of government. The majority is not satisfied with the status quo, which is of course why they are willing to sign a charter petition.

So if we can't get everything we want in the initial charter, what should be the priority? The most important thing we can get out of an initial charter is the power to make changes to that charter in the future: *The power to amend the charter by initiative*. After we establish the initial charter, we can then follow up with bolder, more innovative ideas. Establishing an effective initiative process that empowers us to amend the charter will not be an easy fight. The powers that be are well aware of how critical the amendment provision is, and they will seek to place it out of reach of the people, generally by making signatures requirements so high that it deters all such efforts. This has been the case with charters established in other counties. But it is a fight I think we can win.

That is why it is so important that progressives get involved with the charter effort. Fundamental political change is risky, and there are no guarantees that we will end up with a system of government that is any better than what we have now. It all depends on who gets involved with the process. You may be surprised at how much we have in common with populist conservatives who are also fed up with corporate and elite dominance of our political systems, the destruction of the environment, the poor state of education, etc., and who have taken an interest in the charter effort. Together we can create a populist coalition that can challenge the power elite, and wield significant influence throughout the charter process. The result will be a charter that strengthens local democracy, and opens the door to future charter amendments, and significant social change.

PETITION

on other side for you to take around to your friends, neighbors and co-workers to sign. Do it soon and send it in to the address at the top !

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Home Rule Coalition
PO BOX 11782
Olympia, WA 98508

Home Rule Committee
PO BOX 11782
Olympia, WA 98508

Washington State
Thurston County Home Rule Charter
Freeholder Election
Petition

We the undersigned voters of Thurston County, State of Washington, pursuant to ARTICLE 11, SECTION 4 OF THE WASHINGTON STATE CONSTITUTION hereby PETITION the legislative authority of Thurston County, State of Washington, to call for an election so that a Board of Freeholders shall be elected for the purpose of framing a county charter. Further, the board of freeholders is to consist of twenty-four (24) freeholders elected as provided for in ARTICLE 11, SECTION 4 OF THE WASHINGTON STATE CONSTITUTION.

Further, the election of the Board of Freeholders is to be conducted as provided in ARTICLE XI, SECTION 4 OF THE WASHINGTON STATE CONSTITUTION.

WARNING: Every person who signs this petition with any other than his/her true name, or who knowingly signs more than one of these petitions, or signs a petition seeking an election when he/she is not a registered voter, or signs a petition when he/she is otherwise not qualified to sign, or who makes herein any false statement, shall be guilty of a criminal offense and may be punished by fine or imprisonment or both.

	Signature	Print Name Here For positive identification	Address Where Registered to Vote	Town	ZIP	COUNTY	Phone/email (Optional)
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3.						THURSTON	
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Please Return Petitions With One or More Signatures As Soon As Possible

Blank petitions may be copied in their entirety on one side of 11x17 paper for the express purpose of gathering signatures.
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DO NOT CUT OR REDUCE SIZE.

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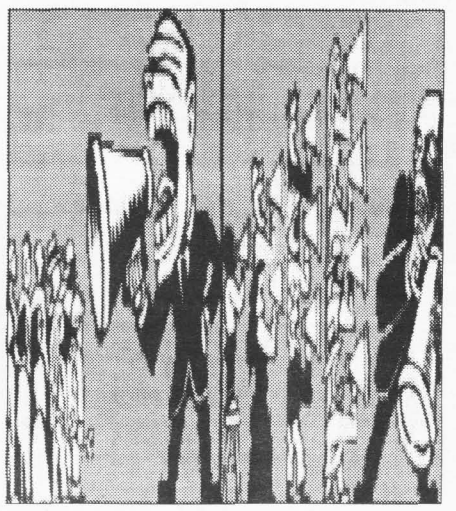
Part II of a 3-part series

Media, Democracy, and the Internet



Sarah Maden

Today, the Internet is a comparable tool to Standard Oil's use of railroads to create a monopoly. As the ultimate superhighway, the Internet moves the most valuable resources of all, information and education, from place to place. However, it is and will probably continue to do so often in the name of corporate profit and political power, just like every other form of mass media in this country. How does the corporate-owned media suppress democracy via the Internet? Through infringements of personal Internet space with pervasive commercialization and privacy infractions.

Already, TV, telephone, and computer technologies are merging into one giant Internet web network. This gives people, as well as corporations, the power to communicate freely and move information. Already, Internet portals bombard users with blinking advertising banners, infringe on intellectual property rights, order search lists according to the highest payer, and create "cookie" profiles of users with personal information with which to supply businesses. Thus, Internet research is biased by the order in which sites appear. Our privacy is violated by the corporate drive for profit. Our space is invaded by pervasive advertising.

Once upon a time, in 1995, computer specialists and users held online debates concerning the appropriateness of commercial activity on the Internet. Now the space is free for the taking and commercialization of the Net is booming. Consumers are subjected to blinking ads on Internet portals such as AOL. Although advertisers realize that only about 0.5% of consumers respond to banner ads, they continue to flood the Net with them in an effort to familiarize the customer with the brand or logo, an action called "branding." Ad specialists hope the banner ad will become like a glass of water in a restaurant, ubiquitous but seemingly ignored. Many new ads are a novel breed of blatant misinformation, dubbed "integrated marketing." Integrated marketing is a product of advertisers consciously mixing news and advertising so that the web audience cannot easily distinguish between the two. This approach is similar to the TV infomercial and lengthy paid advertising documents in popular news magazines. "Contextual advertising" is on the rise as well. This is a term for programs offering more than just a product ad, but simultaneously offering information, product tips, and newsletters. Leading Internet research groups conclude that to be successful on the Internet, media companies must remove traditional barriers between editorial, advertising sales, and technical staff. Thus, when an Internet user logs on to a search engine, looking for information or media news, they will likely have to wade through promotional offers and distinguish between media information and corporate advertising before they can find the information they seek. Apparently, the web is officially commercialized. Media and advertising are becoming harder and harder to tell apart. The notion of the Net as a liberating tool for democracy is weak from this perspective. Who is liberated when bogged down by such pervasive advertising?

Thus, when an Internet user logs on to a search engine, looking for information or media news, they will likely have to wade through promotional offers and distinguish between media information and corporate advertising before they can find the information they seek.

Not only is the casual Internet user bogged down by advertising, but once through the ads, the user must face the hierarchy of the search engine. After entering a keyword search, a list of web sources appears. Although this list may be random or printed with only the keyword in mind, many times it also reflects moneyed corporate interests. The list may be influenced by the primary sponsors of the portal or by the highest payers. Companies are paid highly for optimizing the ranking of sites in search engines through format and presentation changes. For instance, the new Microsoft Internet Explorer 4.0 offers 250 highlighted channels, and the "plum positions" belong to Disney and Timer-Warner. Portals avidly encourage users by promoting Hollywoodesque programming. In addition to site preference, portals often refer the user to e-commerce sites in relation to the topic. Despite the recent NASDAQ-fueled Internet stock crisis, many businesses have spent the extra money to ward off web competitors and will more seriously move onto the Net in the future. The new concept for big business on the Net is to integrate the Net into existing businesses. So, it is likely that multiple e-commerce references will continue to show up during Internet searches as the trend towards integration increases. This portal preference for sites with big money is not in line with the notion of a democratic web with free information for all. Instead, this is often a web with information for all of the privileged class who possess the technology and know-how to wade through advertising, e-commerce, and false media in order to reach their final, distant goal -- information.

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The Roar of a Wave That Could Drown the Whole World

Ron Jacobs

While speaking in Portland, Oregon this past May about the Weather Underground and the anti-imperialist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, I was asked whether concern for the environment was as much a part of anti-capitalist analyses then as it is today. I had to think for a minute, before answering that the current awareness of capitalism's role in environmental destruction came from the anti-nuclear movement and not the movement opposed to imperial war. Indeed, many movement groups and individuals considered phenomenon like Earth Day as establishment efforts to take attention away from the wars, coups and other more obvious machinations of the world's rulers. In addition, certain leftist groups actually supported nuclear power and opposed the anti-nuke movement at the time.

As the anti-nuclear movement grew in numbers, a clear anti-capitalist/anti-authoritarian analysis began to take shape amongst its more leftist and anarchist members. Although these folks were given much less coverage than the more mainstream opposition, it is their legacy which we see and hear so much of in today's anti-capitalist gatherings. Both the mainstream and radical factions of the anti-nuke movement called for direct action, although the more radical elements usually disagreed with the mainstream desire to coordinate all actions and arrests with the police: a phenomenon which usually resulted in protests being choreographed games of duck-duck-goose, with the police choosing their targets and taking them away.

Sometimes this desire to not anger the police reached absurd lengths. When our affinity group in 1981 attempted to go outside the protest boundaries decided by the police and the protest coordinators at the Diablo Canyon plant near San Luis Obispo, CA., we were rudely chastised by the protest marshals. Furthermore, when we refused to leave the road we were blocking and actually resisted the police attempts to arrest us(as opposed to being willingly arrested), we were told by the protest marshals that we were risking losing their support in jail if we didn't follow the rules.

Not all actions against nuclear power were organized so strictly, but the desire to not piss off the police dominated the planning at most of these actions in the United States. Europe was different. An action I attended in 1977 in Germany against the Brokdorf plant was comparable to the battles in Quebec City in May 2001 at the protests against the Free Trade of the Americas summit.

I mention this because of the current push by the energy industry and its client governments to revive nuclear power. As energy users stumble their way from one industry-created crisis to the next, all the while watching the direct and associated costs rise while utility executives pocket millions in bonuses stolen from consumers' pockets via utility bills and taxpayer bailouts, these same executives continue searching for even more ways to maximize their profits. This means more environmental destruction, more military force to keep foreign resources accessible to U.S. companies, more lies designed to convince us these actions are in our interest and, especially in the case of nuclear power, huge taxpayer subsidies for construction and blatant disregard for our safety.

This new drive for nuclear energy will be used by the industry to convince the public that old, oftentimes damaged reactors, should be allowed to remain online instead of being shut down as originally intended

For most people who were alive in the 1970s and 1980s, nuclear power is synonymous with Three-Mile Island and Chernobyl: two major accidents that graphically illustrated the inherent dangers of this type of energy.

Despite GW's claims to the contrary, nuclear energy is still unsafe. In addition, there is a demand in the industry to cut costs-a drive which can only come at the expense of costly safety designs. Add to this the fact that this new drive for nuclear energy will be used by the industry to convince the public that old, oftentimes damaged reactors, should be allowed to remain online instead of being shut down as originally intended and the likelihood for disaster becomes even more greater. As Paul Gunter of the Nuclear Information and Resource Service noted: "We believe we are in more danger (now) with nuclear power industry than we were when public concern focused on construction projects, because now is the time that the industry is seeking new bottom lines that pit profit margins versus safety margins."

In addition, plants store their high-level radioactive waste in pools or in dry containers. Here in the U.S., the federal government was supposed to take control of the waste in 1998 — but that did not happen (not that this would make much of a difference). Instead, each state is left to its own devices. For example, Vermont sends its waste from the Vermont Yankee plant to Sierra Blanca in Texas. This site is located in a poor community populated primarily by people of color-environmental racism at its most blatant. In Europe, problems concerning radioactive waste disposal are reaching a critical point. No country has either the room or the will to host disposal facilities. Consequently, shipments of waste are carted about on trains, provoking protests and very expensive law enforcement operations to thwart those protests. The mere fact that such material is even on commercial train lines is enough to cause fear throughout the regions these trains travel.

There are alternatives. Solar, wind, turbine and recycled wood products are all tried and true energy producers. They are used widely in certain parts of North America and, in the case of solar and wind, even more so in Japan. Decentralized in nature, these forms of energy production have the potential to not only diminish energy costs for the consumer and producer, they also can create a situation where the producer and consumer are one and the same. Of course, this is one reason why the energy industry and its patrons in government are so opposed to these forms. After all, how would they make their exorbitant profit if they can not control the source of production? This is why the industry prefers nuclear power-it requires a highly centralized system of management and is already organized under the auspices of the military. Indeed, some of the waste produced by nuclear power goes towards nuclear weapons production. This organizational dynamic insures the continued domination of our energy policy by the same group of elites who also control America's "defense." Unless we wrest that control from these men and women, our children will pay the price. Believe me, it is a price that is measured in more than dollars.

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The Lives and Legacies of Woody Guthrie and Ralph Chaplin

This Land is Your Land

David Zink

There's an interesting exhibit at the Washington State History Museum that you might like to see. The museum is located at Union Railroad Station complex at 1911 Pacific Avenue in downtown Tacoma.

Let me walk you through the three displays make up this exhibit.

The first display we come to is about Ralph Chaplin, who joined the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in 1913 and was active in this organization right up through the 1950's. Also known as the "Wobblies", the IWW, through actions that were at times unbelievably heroic, and often against formidable odds, advanced its program of working-class empowerment through industrial unionism. Chaplin helped the miners, lumberjacks, farm workers, and others organize to protect their basic interests. He was a radical poet, an agitator, and a songwriter. He served as editor of IWW papers like ***Solidarity*** and the ***Industrial Worker***, and wrote the internationally recognized labor anthem "Solidarity Forever".

Most people today are unfamiliar with the fiery revolutionary rhetoric of the Wobblies, but we all benefit from their legacy. The Wobblies aggressively advocated the forty-hour workweek, the eight-hour day, free speech, and workplace safety standards.

Chaplin spent four years in Chicago's Cook County jail and the federal penitentiary at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for his political beliefs. In later life, he served as editor of the ***Tacoma Labor Advocate*** and as curator of the Washington State Historical Society. He died in 1961 at age 75.

The Chaplin display provides much relevant information for those who seek to understand the story of the IWW, from its beginnings through the post-World War II anti-communist witch-hunt.

Some background may be helpful here.

During the Great Depression that preceded World War II, there was a mounting level of heightened working class-consciousness and militancy, with a wave of labor union organizing and cooperative formation throughout America. People in droves were dissatisfied, finding the capitalist system defective, and ready to trade it in for something better. Increasingly, it was starting to look as if America was approaching the critical mass needed to put fundamental social change on the agenda. The Communist Party USA (CPUSA) continued to grow through the war, until it was the largest of several popular parties that advocated a socialist America. These developments, understandably, caused considerable consternation among the economic elite and right wing.

During World War II, the Nazis wreaked devastation across much of Europe, but especially against their mortal enemy, the USSR. The Russians vowed that this must never happen again. In several Eastern European countries it had liberated from the Nazis and Italian Fascists, the Red Army installed partisan leaders allied with the 3rd (Communist) International in key governmental positions. During the War, communist partisans of Greece, Italy, and France earned widespread respect for being the most tenacious fighters in the anti-fascist Resistance. In the years immediately following the war, communists waged credible electoral campaigns and won many elections at municipal and provincial levels. It looked as if Western Europe was on the threshold of revolution.

Returning GIs, who didn't mind fighting, plus pent-up demands for better wages and working conditions, exploded in the strike wave of 1946-47. This was the biggest strike wave the U.S. has ever seen.

Then, in 1949, after a long, arduous struggle, the Chinese finally succeeded in throwing off the imperialist chains. The owning class and anti-Communists in the U.S. went ballistic. Headlines screamed "Who Lost China ?!"

The U.S. government, under President Harry "Give 'em Hell" Truman, decided that it was time to do something – quickly - to check the "red menace", both in Western Europe and domestically. The U.S. sent arms to the British to suppress the revolutionary movement in Greece and install a right-wing military dictatorship in that country. The Marshall Plan was launched to bring funds in to reconstruct Western Europe and support anti-communist parties. On the domestic front, Truman called out troops to break a railroad workers strike.

Things that had been previously unthinkable started happening. Staunch allies of the U.S. and anti-fascist patriots who had been beyond reproach, were puzzled and stunned as they were suddenly denounced as sneaky and sinister enemies out to destroy America. Demagogues like Senator Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin launched a campaign to "expose" and remove "Reds" from the military, government, labor union leadership, and schools. The CPUSA, as the largest Left political party, was seen as a special threat and became the main target. It was denounced as a pack of traitorous rats. The corporate media built the paranoia by dutifully cranking out anti-communist propaganda, while avoiding any criticism of capitalism. Socialist groups were also harassed. Many loyal Americans were blacklisted; employers were pressured to fire any employee who "is now, or at any time has been, a member or supporter of a revolutionary or Communist organization". Many lost their livelihood, and had their careers and family lives disrupted. Some were sent to prison, and a few to the electric chair. Then, in the early 50s, American troops were sent to Korea in a bloody war to stop the unification of that country by the communists.

As an outspoken critic of capitalism, Ralph Chaplin became an obvious target of the hysteria. The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), through pressure and thinly veiled threats, had Chaplin by the scrotum. He succumbed and agreed to "cooperate" with HUAC by telling "boogey-man" stories about the CPUSA. To seasoned progressive activists and students of Left politics, Chaplin's testimony was laughably far-fetched and incongruous.

These were scary times for leftists. Woody Guthrie also lived in fear of reprisals for his involvement with progressive causes.

The tragedy was that too many Americans either didn't see through this nonsense, or were too intimidated to stand up against it. The repeated use of fear tactics and wedge issues to divide the Left eroded solidarity. Many lacked the political sophistication and understanding of capitalism needed to see all this as so much baloney.

The labor, civil rights, and other progressive movements were weakened as they were deprived of many of their best leaders. Instead of resolutely standing together in solidarity, the membership was intimidated to the point that they allowed their best leaders to be silenced or taken away. This set these struggles years, perhaps decades back. Capitalism had been saved.

Things got even more bizarre. Eventually McCarthy went so far as accusing President Eisenhower of being a communist.

These were scary times for leftists. Woody Guthrie also lived in fear of reprisals for his involvement with progressive causes. Would he be the next to be subpoenaed? The anti-communists got what they were after: Guthrie, Chaplin, and many others "toned down" their work considerably. To his credit, Woody never informed on others to HUAC.

It's easy to look back with 20-20 hindsight and condemn those who crumbled and cooperated with the reactionaries. But that's not my intention here. We need to **learn** from this experience. When the ruling class feels threatened, they will not hesitate to use similar, or worse, methods again. If we are to avoid being clobbered again, we will need to develop a higher degree of solidarity.

And that's why these exhibits are important. Increasing popular understanding of Labor History is a key part of our struggles as progressives. It is rarely taught in public school. The ruling class is aware of its precarious position. For its own good reasons, it would rather not have people learn about Labor History. For the most part, it remains an "Untold Story". Most school texts don't discuss it, or, if they do, reflect the dominant background assumption that unionists and socialists are irrelevant troublemakers. If books like Howard Zinn's "People's History" were adopted as standard public school textbooks, people might start asking questions and begin taking some appropriate and overdue action that the oligarchy would find unacceptable.

The central display about Woody Guthrie's life and times is on loan from the Smithsonian Institution. Fascinating and well conceived, it explores the river that is folk and popular music. It illus-

(Continued next page)

WORKER QUIZ

Your Rights at Work...

You work at a fast food restaurant One day the owner comes in and orders you to take off the Save the Whales button you are wearing.

The owner is in a really bad mood. He told a guy that works there to get a haircut before coming back- to work.

He told a woman to remove a necklace cross she was wearing. He ordered another worker to stop - bringing magazines to work.

Then he searched employee lockers while they were working, looking for stolen goods.

When he overheard workers on break talking about what he was doing, he ordered them to stop bellyaching and said anyone who disagreed with his policies must be guilty of the thievery he is investigating.

***He punished one worker be thinks* has been stealing things by ordering him to clean the fryer, even though it wasn't his turn.**

When the worker said be was innocent and has the right to prove it, the boss told him the only Constituitional right he has is to look for work elsewhere. Anyone who disobeys his orders he announced will be fired.

How many constitutional rights is the boss violating? Unfortunately, the answer is none. In today's United States, you are employed "at will" and you check your rights at the door every time you go to work - unless you have a union, that is. If you have a union, you can negotiate a contract wit your employer to protect yourself from the actions taken by this restaurant owner.

Adapted from UAW's *Solidarity*.

(Guthrie, continued)

trates what shaped his consciousness and music, and shows how he, in turn, influenced generations of musicians from Bob Dylan to Ani Difranco.

In the 1930's and 40's, Woody transformed the folk ballad into a vehicle for social observation and protest. Fueled by a boundless curiosity about the world, Guthrie hit the road during the Great Depression, hitchhiking and riding the rails across this country. He sang about his experiences in the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression, and the lives of real people. Through his music, Woody Guthrie raised public consciousness about working-class politics, and social issues. With his guitar proudly emblazoned with the slogan "This Machine Kills Fascists", Woody sang at strikes, labor union fundraisers, and communist meetings. He wrote songs about labor, its victories, its catastrophes, and its heroes. For Woody, the Communists were heroes akin to the "Robin Hood" outlaws he had been singing about for a decade. Members of the CPUSA threw themselves into efforts to organize farm workers and those working in the auto-making, meatpacking, and steel industries into unions, and neighborhood residents to resist evictions.

He also wrote a column for the ***Daily Worker***, "Woody Sez", for several years during the 1940s.

When he was singing hillbilly songs on a Los Angeles radio station in the late 1930s, Woody would mail out a small mimeographed songbook to listeners who wanted the words to his songs. On the bottom of one page appears the following: "This song is Copyrighted in the U.S., under Seal of Copyright # 154085, for a period of 28 years, and anybody caught singin' it without our permission will be mighty good friends of ourn, 'cause we don't give a dern. Publish it. Write it. Sing it. Swing to it. Yodel it. We wrote it, that's all we wanted to do. W.G."

Guthrie was commissioned by the Bonneville Power Administration to write and record songs to gather support for the massive hydroelectric dam projects, chief of which was the Grand Coulee Dam. He was a prolific poet & songwriter, but this exhibit also displays his sketches, some quirky, some powerful, and usually imaginative.

The third display which makes up this exhibit shows the paintings of Vanessa Helder, and shows what this area looked like when Guthrie arrived. Helder painted scenes of the rough beauty of the Grand Coulee area of Washington State. Her style is similar to the naturalist/impressionist paintings of the Canadian Group of Seven.

There are listening points where you can hear Woody's songs on stereo headphones, performed by himself, Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Billy Bragg, Odetta, Richie Havens, and other folk music notables.

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Woody paved the way for later singer/songwriters who have been moved by conscience to share experiences and voice opinions in a forthright manner. Popular music today would be very different if not for his contributions. I was struck by how some of Guthrie's last songs, which were recorded by Billy Bragg and the band Wilco on the album "Mermaid Avenue", seem to blend right in with the early rock music of the 1950's. I can hear a clear Guthrie influence in the recordings of such rockabilly stars as Carl Perkins, Buddy Holly, Richie Valens, and Elvis Pressley. In 1988, Woody was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Guthrie's career as a singer-activist ended prematurely when he developed Huntington's Disease, a degenerative nervous disorder that destroys muscle control and cognitive abilities. He was hospitalized in 1957, and died after a lengthy battle with this disease. Toward the end, he could no longer perform or even speak.

This exhibit is scheduled to be at the Washington State History Museum in Tacoma until 30 September 2001. Admission price is $7. for non-members, and free on Thursdays from 5 to 7 PM. If you're interested in labor and cultural history, you'll find plenty of interest in this is display. To do it justice, allow about two hours minimum to see it, longer if there's a concert going on. For more information, phone: "1-888-Be-There"

I'll close with one more quote from Woody:

I am out to sing songs that will prove to you that this is YOUR world, and that if it has hit you pretty hard and knocked you for a dozen loops, no matter how hard its run you down and rolled over you; no matter what color, what size you are, how you are built; I am out to sing the songs that will make you take pride in yourself and in your work.

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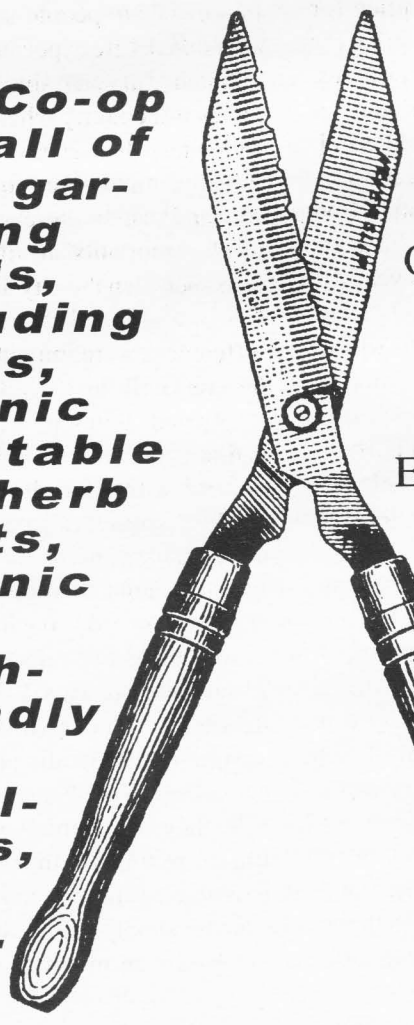

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Cuba Today, More Just than Others But Not a Model

Peter Bohmer

Our trip to Cuba

Hi, I recently returned from four months in Cuba. Many people have asked me about my trip so this is an open letter about the experience of my family there and some of my impressions of what is going on in Cuba. I would love to hear your questions and comments.

My four children and I arrived in Havana, Cuba on January 19th from Mexico City. Filemon left after two months, Inti after three, Tony and I left on may, 19th and Josina is staying until mid July. All of them enjoyed being in Cuba and hope to return. Tony attended a public elementary school, 6th grade, for almost five hours a day. At first he had difficulty following what was going on but his Spanish improved appreciably over our stay and he became very knowledgeable about Cuban history. The classrooms are small, the teachers are underpaid, the food at school is poor, but what is also impressive is that the quality of education is the same throughout the country—rural and urban, poorer and better off neighborhoods. Although Tony disagreed, I think it is good that there are no private schools, which as we saw in Mexico is where the better off families send their kids, which further weakens the financial support for public schools. Filly and Inti became friends with a group of Cubans who are very much into hip-hop, Cuban and the more radical U.S. groups such as Dead Prez. They also learned a lot about Cuba and U.S. foreign policy, really liked Cuba, had a good experience and want to go back. They returned early to go back to their respective schools. Josina has really liked being in Cuba, has been taking graduate classes in sociology and international relations at the University of Havana, and says Havana is the most beautiful city she has ever seen in her life. She says that her experience has furthered her resolve to work for social justice in the United States and perhaps pursue graduate school in Latin American Studies. It was also a good family experience as we spent a lot of time together—shopping for food, cooking, cleaning, travelling around and trying to figure out how things worked.

We lived in two places in the Vedado section of Havana, both about 1½ miles west of the center of town. We first lived in a house and then moved to a two bedroom apartment for the final two and ½ months. They were both expensive, and we found that renting out houses or apartments to foreigners is a way of making a large amount of money in Cuba. For example, our landlady who owned the apartment made about $500 a month after expenses from us, which is many times what anyone earns who receives a salary in pesos. Owners of rentals are supposed to pay $100 a bedroom to the state but many claim fewer rooms than they rent out. The apartment was very comfortable, from our balcony you could see the sunset over the bay every evening. There were a lot of power outages, maybe two or three a week, but for the most part they did not last more than two hours. The electricity is on far more than in the early 1990's.

I taught a graduate class on the Political Economy of the U.S. through my affiliation with the Center for the Study of the United States (CESEU), which is part of the University of Havana. Frank Thompson, taught the first four classes, focusing on poverty and inequality in the U.S., and I taught the last 10. I enjoyed the teaching and my students—most were faculty at the University of Havana, or at the Communist Party school. They were for the most part very knowledgeable about the United States and usually felt free to speak up. Only infrequently did we discuss Cuba, although they were some very lively discussions about race relations as well as the level of wages in Cuba, and about income and wage differentials. On these topics, I usually analyzed the situation in the United States, e.g., how we live today in the U.S. in a system of formal racial equality but substantive racial inequality and then asked about the situation in Cuba, e.g., racism. The dominant viewpoint was that racial prejudice existed within the population but not racism. Although I believe Cuba has made qualitatively more advances in reducing racism than the U.S., and is far less racist, racism continues in Cuba. It seems to me there is awareness of this at the highest level of the Communist Party. Although it is not called affirmative action, the Communist Party is making it a priority to recruit and advance Blacks and women. A similar effort is taking place in increasing the representation of Afro-Cubans and women in employment in positions of responsibility.

I mainly taught in English with a Spanish translator although the classes were more lively when no translator was present and I had to teach in Spanish. I was disappointed by the small size of the class, only nine students were signed up and the average attendance was about six. CESEU did not do much recruiting for the class. My experience with the Center for the Study of the United States was mixed. I went to Cuba knowing they wanted to sponsor me but without an academic visa in hand. CESEU worked to get my tourist visa changed first to a three month academic visa and then to a four month visa. I also appreciated that they also got extended visas for all of my children. There is a very talented group of people who work at CESEU. A major problem, which I also saw in other institutions is that it is very centralized, that decisions go through the director who is over-committed and stretched too thin. I had hoped to be able to be involved, get invited to ongoing seminars or discussions about the present and future of Cuban society and none of this happened even though I was promised many times I would be invited to these types of discussions. For example, I had prepared a list of questions on the Cuban economy that never got answered.

Toward the end of my stay, I met with various researchers at CESEU to initiate two groups, one on the global economy and another on social problems/social movements in the United States. We will see whether there is any follow up on this. Much of what I hoped to learn and do in Cuba didn't happen, but it was a worthwhile family experience. Plus I gained a deeper kind of understanding than from my two earlier visits for the Radical Philosophy Association sponsored conferences that I attended in 1992 and 1993.

Changes in Cuba

My ideas about Cuba changed from day to day, and I have studied Cuba for over 30 years. I think Cuban society is one of the most just and equal in the world and it is very important that it survive as a non-capitalist society. Moreover, we in the U.S. have the responsibility to work against the criminal U.S. blockade of Cuba. None-the-less, to me Cuba is not a model of an alternative society; economic inequality is growing substantially and although output and national income have been growing steadily for the last six years, wages for most people who get paid in the national currency do not provide for an adequate standard of living. Part of the context for this is the Special Period. With the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the price for Cuban sugar declined and the price for Cuba's main import, oil, rose many times. Fidel Castro has called the period from 1989 to the present, the Special Period. From 1989 to 1993, the Cuban economy went into a free-fall, with output and incomes falling far more than it did in the United States during the worst years of the great depression, 1929-1933. Since 1994, there has been annual growth in production in Cuba but national output is still about 10% lower than it was in the late 1980's and the population is about 10% bigger, about 11 million. The legalization and growing use of the dollar, the growth of tourism and small private businesses, farmer's markets, and mixed enterprises, 50% foreign owned, the decrease of what is available on the ration cards, and the higher prices for many goods and services, priced in dollars or dollar equivalents, and the end of full employment, have all meant a far more difficult economic situation for most Cubans. Cuba has survived these difficult 12 years of the Special Period but it is a society much less equal than in the late 1980's with far more economic hardship.

For example, a family with two high paying professional wage earners receives about 1000 pesos a month. It is not right to translate this into dollars as many goods and services are free or heavily subsidized; e.g., goods on the ration card, public transportation, health care, electricity, water. For other goods, such as those bought in many of the private food markets, etc. A peso is worth close to a dollar. The problem for most Cubans is that more and more goods and services are priced in dollars or dollar equivalents, making the prices exorbitantly high for workers earning pesos in the socialist sector of the economy. A dollar is convertible into pesos at about 20 pesos to the dollar. More and more goods are priced in dollars or dollar equivalents and because most of these are imported and are made even more expensive because of the blockade, they cost the same or more than in the United States. For example, a bottle of cooking oil costs $2 or 40 pesos, a pound of butter was also about $2.00, meaning two days' salary for the average wage earner. Televisions and CD players cost more in Cuba than they do in the United States. Thus for Cubans who work in the socialist or state sector, their wages pay for food, public transportation, housing and utilities, with very little left over to pay for medicines that are not readily available, for entertainment, for repairing consumer durables, much less for buying new ones, or even to buy new shoes and clothing for themselves and their children. For the great majority of people in Cuba, real incomes are substantially lower than in the late 1980's although consumption is higher than it was in the early 1990's, which were the worst years of the Special Period. One indication to me that people are doing a little better economically is that the dogs look much better, less skinny than during my earlier visits.

To its credit and unlike other countries, even those with a Communist party in charge such as Vietnam and China, Cuba is committed to maintaining free and universal health care and education.

Health and Education in Cuba

To its credit and unlike other countries, even those with a Communist party in charge such as Vietnam and China, Cuba is committed to maintaining free and universal health care and education. This is an incredible achievement and its importance to people's lives cannot be overstated. Life expectancy in Cuba and infant mortality are similar to the United States in a country where GDP per person is less than 1/10 of the U.S. level. Equally impressive from what I have seen and heard is there is little difference in infant mortality and life expectancy in Cuba between the city and the countryside. Prior to the 1959 revolution, these differences were immense. Look at the differences in the United States between blacks and whites, e.g., infant mortality is more than twice as high for African-Americans than for whites. Schools, curriculum, resources, accessibility up to and including university also seem similar throughout the country. However, even with regards to healthcare and education, there are some real problems. Although hospital care and doctors' visits are free, Cubans must pay for prescriptions. For medicines produced in Cuba and some that are readily available, they are affordable to all Cubans. But those that are in short supply and imported are quite expensive, e.g., often a month supply of anti-asthma spray or a dosage of an antibiotic would cost $10 to $12, which is almost the average monthly salary. Often these medicines were only available in the pharmacy or hospital for foreigners, adding to feelings of second class citizenship by many

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(Cuba, continued)

Cubans.

The level of education in Cuba is high. Literacy is 100% and virtually everyone has a secondary or 9th grade education. Even in the most rural areas, there are secondary schools, even if there are very few students. Compare this to Mexico, a much richer country in average income, where secondary schools and even elementary schools are lacking in many rural areas. Although university education is free and access is far more equal in Cuba than the United States, the students at the universities in Havana, and I suspect nationally are predominantly white and disproportionately from the strata of professionals and officials. This was not true in the 1970's and early 1980's. University education today is for the most part, limited to those who make a high score on entrance tests. Parents who are college educated are more likely to help their kids do well, e.g., by hiring tutors for them. I was surprised at the relatively small number of Black students at University of Havana and the Polytechnic University, Juan Antonio Echeverria. Most everyone I spoke to agreed that this was happening but the explanations were not adequate. A common explanation was that the expected payoff in terms of higher earnings for getting a college degree no longer held, given the low salaries for professionals. Because of this, many families, particularly those that did not value a college degree except for the higher earnings it had promised, were choosing careers in commerce, entertainment or other sectors where they could earn more. In my past visits to Cuba, the high number of professionals and officials whose parents had been low income campesinos, farmworkers, or low paid blue collar workers stood out and was so clearly different from the United States. Although mobility between generations of the same family in Cuba is still obviously far greater than the United States and the opportunities for blacks seem far greater in Cuba than in the United States in relation to the possibilities in each society, the changes in Cuba in terms of who is attending the universities are quite troubling. There is a growing recognition of this problem there.

Economically, there is clearly economic growth in Cuba, which I think is very necessary given the many needs—for improvement in public transportation, for increasing production and consumption of food and other consumer goods, for more books, for improving the infrastructure—phones, roads, water, electric systems, for developing energy sources. The average level of productivity is very low in most sectors of the economy. There is an attempt to address this by making wages tied more directly to productivity, with wage increases for individual workers depending upon management's assessment of the worker's efficiency, i.e., material incentives. This together with new systems of enterprise accounting and more pressure on firms to reduce costs and be self-financing are the main steps being taken to raise productivity and efficiency. Large layoffs, e.g., in sugar, are also being discussed, which may raise productivity but is unlikely to raise output given the absence of alternative employment in productive sectors. Investment in new technology, particularly computers is another focus, particularly in the tourist related sectors. The movement away from Soviet technology has been a slow and costly process, slowing economic growth. Although there is some discussion of greater worker participation in the production process, this does not seem to be a priority in the current period. It would require a huge commitment at all levels of society and at all levels of the workplace to make this happen. There is some attempt to improve the quality of goods and services and to better meet consumer needs but primarily in the tourist sector. Thus far the solutions proposed to raise productivity and output do not seem adequate to this important task.

Tourism in Cuba

Tourism is the dynamic sector in the Cuban economy. It is not only seen as the primary source of foreign exchange but also as the driving force for economic growth and development. The growth in tourism, since my last visit, 1993, is striking. Cuba hopes to have close to two million visitors this year or by 2002. The majority of tourist dollars stay in Cuba today as more and more of the spending is on Cuban made goods and services. Tourism is backwards and forward linked to other sectors of the economy, such as construction and building materials, infrastructure, telecommunications and transportation, entertainment, food processing and restaurants, etc. There is a serious attempt to spread tourism throughout the country although it currently concentrated in parts of Havana, Varadero and to a lesser extent, Santiago. I also think it trickles down more in Cuba to Cubans not directly connected to tourism than in other countries, in terms of the imports of necessities it finances and in the use of the revenue generated to finance public services.

On the other hand, there is much I find very troubling with the huge concentration of resources in this sector and the type of tourism emphasized. Besides leaving fewer resources for other sectors, in the short run, it is an important contributor to economic inequality as the incomes of many in this sector may be ten or more times higher than a salary in the public non-dollar sector. This also contributes to many skilled professionals leaving the jobs they were trained for to work as taxi-drivers, hotel clerks, or in restaurants. For example, in five cases where I took private taxis, I asked the drivers if they formerly had other jobs. Three of the taxi drivers had previously worked a doctor, as a highly skilled agricultural engineer and in the foreign ministry. Another worked part-time as a doctor and part-time as a cab driver, to provide the main source of his income. Given the very low level of Cuban salaries at this time, the differences in the standard of living between the average tourist and Cuban is very big. This has led to increased dissatisfaction with the functioning of the Cuban economy and the average level of income, a sharply increased desire for a standard of consumption closer to the tourist, a changing value system that makes the highest priority, individual consumption, and an increased desire to leave Cuba, particularly by young people. Because of the higher incomes associated with tourism, the formal and informal sector jobs tied to tourism become the desired jobs to work in, even if this means hustling and breaking the law.. Tourism furthers racism and sexism in Cuba. Most tourists in Cuba are European, the largest numbers being French and Italian. Afro-Cubans talking to tourists on the streets are very likely to be questioned by the police, or the police are likely to ask the tourists if they are being hassled. This is one of the forms of racial profiling that takes place. It also seems that the better paying jobs in the tourist sector tend to go to younger and lighter-skinned Cubans, particularly in enterprises managed by a foreign company, such as most of the big hotels. I was told that after complaints of racial discrimination by the relevant union in 1995-1996, there have been conscious efforts to address this. Much of Cuban tourism has been advertised in Europe as places with beautiful beaches and women, sun and music. This has certainly furthered sex and sexist tourism in Cuba. Although these negative consequences are recognized by many Cuban officials, it seems that the dominant view is that the economic benefits of tourism are absolutely necessary and that the negative social consequences can be limited. Even if the economic benefits of tourism eventually benefit more of the Cuban population than they do now, the values and consciousness that are being furthered are not those consistent with the development of socialist women and men.

There is some interest in Cuba towards moving away from the current forms of tourism which compete against other islands of the Caribbean and tend to bring tourists to Cuba who bring money but a very low level of political consciousness. I find somewhat hopeful the increasing interest by the Cuban government and researchers in ecotourism and cultural tourism. The latter is based on Cuba's unique history and culture and the nature of its society today. It includes for example the increasing attempt by universities to provide university education to students who can pay with foreign exchange for tuition, housing and food. This was the first year that programs existed for U.S. students. Although there was some dissatisfaction with the actual education and living conditions and they were somewhat segregated from Cubans, the quality and quantity of these programs are likely to improve. Cuban interest in cultural tourism is that it would help Cuba offer a more unique tourist experience that was less directly competing with other countries heavily dependent on tourism such as Jamaica and make Cuba less dependent on European tourist tour operators who capture a high proportion of the Cuban dollar. To me, cultural tourism is more attractive than the current dominant form because the values and behavior of tourists attracted to Cuba for its culture are likely to be less disruptive of Cuban values.

With regards to values, I am struck by the greater level of cooperation and sharing among Cubans than in the U.S. and other countries I have visited. One reason for the low level of crime in Cuba, and the relative safety there, is that community means something, that neighbors help each other out and watch out for each other. Community organizations such as the Committees to Defend the Revolution also further community spirit, cohesion and safety. A few small examples—my son, Tony, usually walks around with his shoes untied. He could never walk a block in Havana without someone telling him or me to tie his shoes. On the buses, which are very overcrowded, it is often hard to get off as the move to the exit requires squeezing past many people, where there is no space at all. Usually people will scream at the bus driver to not take off until every one who wants to get off, can. People are constantly running out of spices, soap, coffee, etc. but if neighbors have any of these items, they share it, even if it means running out of it themselves. With the many hours it takes to survive and provide for the family—shopping all over to save a few pesos, long waits for the buses for shopping and to and from work, people, particularly women, who this falls on, have little time for community activities, activism and reading. One's private life seems to increasingly dominate daily activities. On the other hand, I did go to two huge demonstrations and rallies, one on April 16th, 2001, which was the 40th year anniversary of Cuba declaring itself socialist, and the second on May Day. Both were attended by many hundreds of thousands of people. Cubans were strongly encouraged to go by their workplaces and neighborhood associations but not forced to go.

Cuba, A Lot of Justice and a Lot of Contradictions

I have already mentioned the growing economic inequality in Cuba. Besides the growth of tourism, and the higher pay of some who work for themselves or in mixed enterprises, another source of growing inequality is the growth of remittances or money from Cubans who have left Cuba that they send to relatives in Cuba. Estimates of this are around 1 billion dollars a year with up to 50% of all Cuban families receiving something. This means the 1.5 million households who receive gifts (I am assuming there are about 3 million Cuban households) receive about $600 a year on the average, which more than doubles the earnings of those families who receive money from abroad. This is also an important source of racial inequality in Cuba as Cuban emigrees are far more likely to be white than the Cuban population as a whole, and also are likely to earn more money abroad than Blacks who leave Cuba because of the racism in the United States, the country where most Cubans emigrate to.

Another serious and continuing problem is the continued centralization of power and the lack of people's power to effect change at the grassroots level. This is a difficult subject to discuss. The United States continually attacks Cuba for being a dictatorship, for violating human rights. As you no doubt know, this is total hypocrisy on the part of the United States. To those in power in the U.S., the Cuban government must be overthrown because it is independent of the United States. The U.S. has conducted a 40 year murderous war against Cuba. Cuba; survival in the face of this is very inspiring to me and people all over the world. None the less, I find troubling the top down nature of Cuban society and the absence of institutions and avenues for people to challenge the policy and direction of Cuban society. To give an example. The dissatisfaction with the inadequacy of public transportation in Havana, Santiago was almost universal and there was a lot of anger at

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(Cuba, continued)

the sharply reduced schedule on Sundays, the one day off for most Cuban families. There may be defensible reasons for the low priority public transportation is given but what I found was that almost all Cubans felt there was nothing they could do to change these priorities. Even most activists inside the Communist Party of Cuba felt that the decisions came mainly from the top down and that debate within the party was also very limited. As one member said to me, he agreed in principle with Fidel Castro's comments that within the revolution and within socialism all criticism is welcomed, but challenges to socialism will not be accepted. I agree also. The problem is it is interpreted as no criticisms of official policy or Fidel are valid. Cubans feel they cannot change society, and given the difficulty of daily life, most withdraw from political engagement.

Related to this is the stultifying bureaucracy that marks much of Cuban life, combining many of the elements of the second world (Soviet system) with historical Cuban structures. In many cases, officials seemed motivated primarily by doing what would not get them into trouble rather than what was right or helpful. We faced this most strikingly at the University of Havana, in my children trying to take classes there, and also with regards to our immigration status. We heard stories from Cubans continually about decisions that seemed arbitrary with few or no avenues to challenge decisions that they considered unjust, e.g., fines, or non-granting of permission to travel.

As Randall Robinson writes in his recent book, *The Debt*, Cuba does not have the feel of a repressive police state. Open discussions with individuals about strengths and weaknesses of Cuba were easy to have, and we had them daily. Cubans, who dissent, do not disappear nor are they tortured. On the other hand, public and organized criticism is limited. The media, both TV and print, while being far closer to my viewpoint than the mass media in the United States, do not give adequate coverage to social and economic problems in Cuban life and society. From what I observed, most Cubans were far more interested in watching novelas or soap operas than the news or news type programs, and the skepticism towards Cuban media was quite high.

It also seems to me that the principle of Fidel and the leadership of the Communist is to listen to the Cuban people but then to make decisions, small and big, about what is best for them. The fear is that people will make the wrong decision and cannot be trusted. I have a lot of admiration for Fidel as someone totally committed to eradicating poverty, to his belief in the economic equality of all people, to education and health care for all, to defending Cuba against the United States and to his internationalism. Cuba's continued aid to other countries, sending doctors to Africa and Latin America and their training future African and Latin American doctors are examples of what foreign aid should be. I have no regret for naming my youngest son, Antonio Fidel. On the other hand, what also seems clear and I think cannot only be blamed on Cuban attempts to survive in the face of U.S. aggression and undeclared war is a view that Fidel and the leadership of the party and the government should decide what is best for the people in a paternalistic fashion. If not changed, given the low wages of most and the growth of inequality, I fear that socialism will increasingly lose its legitimacy. This already seems to be happening among a high proportion of the young, although less so with older people.

There is a lot of discussion of what will happen after Cuban President Fidel Castro retires or dies, both with regards to U.S.-Cuba relations and the direction of Cuban society. When people asked me, I half-jokingly and half seriously said, Fidel should retire on July 26th, 2003. That would be 50 years to the day he led the heroic attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago against the Batista dictatorship. Fifty years is enough, his life has been an truly inspiring one of struggle, courage and commitment. To me the issue is not so much one man, although Fidel has had an incredible and positive impact on the Cuban people and the world, but the principles that guide the direction of the country. Cuban policy more than who is in power shapes U.S. policy, the more Cuba succumbs to neoliberalism the more friendly the U.S. will be to it. I hope Cuba doesn't succumb.

With regards to the future of Cuba, one person I talked to said the choices facing Cuba were: either a continuation of the current leadership, one that maintained a lot of socialist economic values but was dogmatic and not willing to democratize society; or some of the younger Cuban leaders leading Cuba after Fidel. They would likely push Cuba in a more capitalist and unequal direction but to also permit more civil liberties and dissent.

Neither of these choices are appealing. People to whom I had spoken in my earlier visits who had hope of Cuba surviving the Special Period and then moving towards a truly democratic and socialist society who have become cynical and pessimistic about Cuba's future. To make it clear by democracy, I do not mean the U.S. version of voting for two capitalist parties with two million people in prison. I mean a society where people have the power to shape all aspects of their lives as well as civil liberties. It requires a high amount of equality in income but that is not sufficient. This vision of substantive democracy in a socialist society is not currently on the agenda in Cuba and in fact the discussion of what socialism is, is itself very limited.

Unless Cuba moves in a direction towards a more participatory socialist society, the best that can be hoped for is a Cuban society where the population is increasingly alienated from the state, where private enterprise grows, where income and the standard of living rises but the inequality resembles more and more of the world except that extreme poverty is somewhat reduced and health care and education continue to be provided at little or no cost. The Communist Party may survive but the essence of socialism would be buried.

During my four month visit to Cuba, I was constantly struck by how much more just and equal Cuba was from other countries in the south that I have spent some time in Mexico, Guatemala and Nicaragua. I also found it hopeful that most Cuban officials, as well as members of the Communist Party, social science researchers and teachers believed strongly in economic equality and in reducing poverty in Cuba. I was told many, many times how Fidel and the government are very concerned about the poverty and marginalization of many Cubans and are committed to addressing it. At the same time, I also felt that Cuba was far from being a truly good and just society, a live model to look to. The structural problems can definitely not be understood outside of the U.S. aggression against Cuba but also can not be reduced to it as is so often done. The model of the one party centralized state and centralized economy, even where it is not very corrupt, has a remarkable leader and a Cuban Communist party truly concerned about equality, is flawed and needs to be significantly reformed. It is our responsibility in the United States to end the U.S. blockade and change policy here but there are also much internal change that will have to be done and should be done by the Cuban people and in the short run, this does not seem very likely.

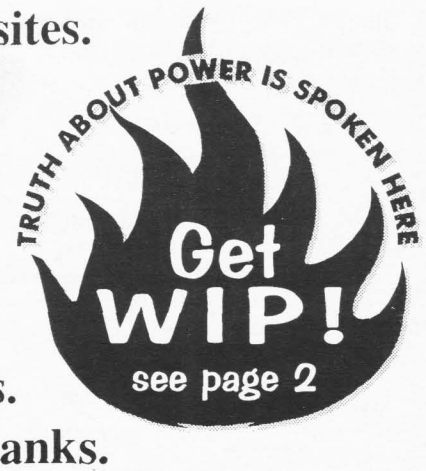
We Need an Alternative to U.S. Capitalism

I have been back one month in Olympia. In thinking back, I remember how much I enjoyed Cuba, its beauty, the hospitality of so many of its people as well as a society that is more cooperative and equal than the U.S. and other societies I have visited. Visit it yourself. To challenge U.S. capitalism we need a vision of an alternative. While there is much we can learn from Cuba, e.g., its internationalism, we need to construct our own model of that alternative.

Works In Progress is a 10-year old alternative newspaper in Olympia & Thurston County. WIP challenges the corporate media by remaining committed to confronting oppression and encouraging action around issues of economic, social, and environmental justice.

WIP is not a 501C3 nonprofit. WIP does not pay any of its workers, because we don't have a means to. We are 10 to 20 volunteers that do everything from collect and write articles, do layout, paste-up, sell advertising, proofread, distribute, make mailing labels, fold & stamp issues for mailing, and replenish distribution sites.

Please consider that each issue costs roughly 500^{00} to produce. WIP also mails 20 free subscriptions to incarcerated people and has other bills to pay such as for toner cartridges, disks, gas money, paper, PO Box rental, etc. Please donate money if you support alternative media, our mission, or the paper you hold in your hands. Thanks.



Media Island: Come And See The Big Changes

We are excited, and we are throwing a party.

Media Island having an open house at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, July 17th. All are welcome to come and eat free food, listen to music, check out available resources, meet interesting people, and have fun. User groups, such as Olynetwork, the Free School, and the Gifford Pinchot Task force shall attend, along with the folks that keep the media island doors open. This is a great chance to come and get to know the place.

What Media Island is and what it does:

In Olympia, the Resource and Networking Center: Media Island runs a downtown community networking and resource center at 816 Adams across the street from the downtown Timberland library. This center is brimming with resources for individuals and groups; it features a kitchen open for people to use, computers, an alternative library of periodicals, books, and videos, a fax machine, a copier (5 cents a copy), meeting and office space for groups, and a 24 hour info-porch where you can pick up or distribute zines, flyers, pamphlets, and all sorts of other free info. There are also interesting people at Media Island who are often eager to discuss a gigantic range of issues. This center needs direction and involvement from the whole community in order to be of better use to the community.

Olympia and beyond: Media Island does other things too: We run a news website, which focuses on global struggles for social change. We umbrella several groups with our non-profit status so that they can do the work without having to set up their own federally recognized non-profit. Media Island also occasionally works on special projects aimed at assisting international campaigns, mostly through multi-media outreach efforts and fundraising assistance.

Olympia's New Media Island: you have the opportunity and the responsibility make media island what you want it to be: Within the last year Media Island has gone through drastic infrastructural changes. These changes were necessary as people left, and new people became involved, and found that the structures in place were fit their desire for an open and collective structure. Power has been taken out of the hands of a small group, and given to a spokescouncil, an expanded board, special projects groups, and to committees, all which have clear decision making powers and responsibilities.

The downtown resource center is now run by the spokescouncil. Spokescouncil meetings are open to the community, and run by consensus. They include individuals who use the space, committee spokes people, and folks who are part of user groups of media island (free school, Olynetwork, and Terra Commons, etc.).

The new and expanded board is responsible for Media Island's legal and financial standing.

The special projects groups are responsible for working on the website and special projects that develop from within Media Island. Committees make and implement the nuts and bolts decisions about the space. This is a fun way to get work done without having to go to a lot of meetings.

How to get involved:

1. **Come on Down**: Use the space, hang out, read, talk, cook something up in the kitchen, pick some strawberries and lettuce to eat from the garden
2. **Hang out at regular times**: Sign up and work a regular building shift to help keep the doors open for the community. This is a great way to meet people, or to get work done while doing a service to the community. Come to a training, and sign up for a shift. There will be a trainings at 5:00 pm on Wednesday, July 11th and at 6:15 pm on Wednesday, July 18th.
3. **Join a committee**: People are urgently needed on all of the committees. Contact the liaison of the committee that you are interested in, and find out what you can do or when the next committee meeting will be:

   Committee Contacts:

   Garden Kevin- 956-1474 kevnielsen@yahoo.com

   Fundraising Howard- 786-8059 hrstruggle@yahoo.com

   Volunteer and Outreach Craig- 867-9477 strawkan@onebox.com

   Maintenance Craig- 867-9477 strawkan@onebox.com
4. **Come to spokescouncil meetings**: The spokescouncil makes decisions about how committees and user groups and individuals are integrated into the whole Resource center animal. They occur every other Wednesday at Media island (816 Adams) the dates for July are the 4th and the 18th.
5. **Give Money**: Media Island owns its building, but must pay bills and debts for the copy machine, for utilities, etc. We are a volunteer organization which relies on the community to provide funding to keep the doors open. Please send checks to _____
6. **Come** to the open house, listen to music, meet people, check out available resources, meet interesting people, eat food, have fun, and if you feel like it, sign up to volunteer.

What happens at Media Island, a few of the user groups:

- **Individuals:** This is obviously the largest Media Island user group. Hundreds of individuals have used resources in their own social, political, and environmental change work.
- **Free School:** The free school coordinates free community classes in Olympia. Calendars of events are available in many locations around town including the media island infoporch. The freeschool utilizes meeting and classroom space, computers, and office space at media island for free. If you are interested in teaching a class please call 705-8882. If you want to do publicity, help to put together the calendar, help to distribute flyers, or work on organizational structure please come to meetings. The free school utilizes many resources at media island currently for free including office space, and meeting space.
- **Olynetwork:** OlyNetwork is an emerging collective whose mission is to increase networking and accessibility within the Olympia social change community. It plans to do this through well-maintained networking kiosks around town, websites, and publications, including calendars and information on groups operating in town.

  To get more information visit the Media Island info-porch or Olynetwork's website at http://www.olynetwork.org. At both locales you will find an outline of what they plan to do, and how they are planning on doing it. Also at these locations is a form for groups to fill out if they want their information included in forthcoming OlyNetwork publications. Please drop this form off at Media Island, located at 816 Adams Street in downtown Olympia.

  If you are interested in becoming a member of the OlyNetwork collective (a volunteer commitment of 10-20 hours a week), or finding out more about OlyNetwork please contact Brian Frank at 704-5358.

  Olynetwork utilizes many resources at Media Island currently for free including office space, phone use, and meeting space.
- **GP Task force:** The mission of the Gifford Pinchot Task Force (GPTF) is to act as an advocate for ancient and native forests, ecologically significant areas, and the regional biodiversity in Southwest Washington with particular focus on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. The Task Force serves as an informational and educational resource on forest ecosystems of southwest Washington for interested citizens and organizations through a variety of avenues, for preserving and restoring biodiversity in the Pacific Northwest. The Gifford Pinchot Task Force rents reasonably priced office space from Media Island
- **Terra Commons:** Terra Commons is working on education on ecological building techniques. Terra Commons currently utilizes many resources at media island for free including office space, phone use, and meeting space.

So, come on down...

Now that you know what is going on inside the yellow building across from the library you should come in and check things out. Meet people, read about stuff, use the computers, cook up some food, pick some lettuce, sign up for a committee, get involved, and have fun. We hope to see you at the open house at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, July 17th for food, music, laughter, and information.

BEFORE YOU FORGET, SUBSCRIBE! SEE PAGE 2

Consumer Culture Kills

-- Warning! --

A new report shows that while deaths from residential fires have been nearly cut in half from 4,500 in 1980 to 2,660 in 1998, those caused by candles have increased dramatically. Candle deaths increased 750 percent from 1980 (20 deaths) to 1998 (170 deaths). The new report shows that house fires have been dropped from 655,000 in 1980 to 332,300 in 1998. In contrast, house fires caused by candles have increased, from 8,500 in 1980 to 12,900 in 1998.

In most cases, candles caused house fires when they were left unattended, tipped over and ignited nearby combustibles. Almost half of home candle fires start in the bedroom. Mattresses or bedding are the most common items that ignite, followed by furniture (dressers, desks, and tables) and then curtains. Tealights and tapers are common culprits in candle fires.

A child playing with the candle itself or near the candle is one of the biggest contributors to candle fires. Faced with fire, many children hide in a closet or under a bed leading to tragic fatalities. In fact, children under age 5 have a fire death rate more than twice the national average. Reduce the chance of a fire, by following CPSC's safety tips:

* Keep matches, lighters and candles away from children.
* Never leave burning candles unattended.
* Keep combustible materials away from candles.
* Don't put candles in a location where children or pets could knock them down.
* Use only non-flammable candle holders
* Always trim the wicks before lighting.

-- Recalled --

Century Products Co., of Macedonia, Ohio, is recalling about 650,000 **"Take 2," "Travel Solutions," "Pioneer," "Travelite," and "Pro Sport"** 4-in-1 strollers. The strollers can unexpectedly collapse or the car seat/carrier adapter can unexpectedly detach. When this happens, an infant or young child inside the stroller or an attached car seat/carrier can fall to the ground and suffer serious injuries. Century has received 681 reports of incidents, including 250 injuries when the stroller unexpectedly collapsed or the car seat/carrier adapter detached. **(800) 766-9998 or www.centuryproducts.com**

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K.B Toys, of Pittsfield, Mass., is recalling about 115,000 **Electronic Light N' Learn** activity gyms. Five detachable hanging rattle toys have small round pegs at the top of the toys that can break off, posing a choking hazard to young children. **(800) 279-5066 or www.KBKIDS.com.**

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Equity Marketing Inc., of Los Angeles, Calif., is voluntarily recalling about 4,300 **Remote Controlled Race Cars**. Problems with the circuits are rendering some of the Remote Controlled Race Cars inoperable. These cars can overheat and emit smoke and may pose a potential burn hazard. **(888) 747-4355 or www.equity-marketing.com.**

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Nantucket Distributing Co. Inc., of South Yarmouth, Mass., is recalling about 28,000 **Galileo** thermometers. The thermometers contain a liquid that is flammable and a hazardous substance that could be harmful or fatal if swallowed. Five reports of thermometers breaking resulting in two injuries. **(800) 876-9677 or www.christmastreeshops.com.**

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Stihl Inc., of Virginia Beach, Va., is recalling about 1,000 **chain saws**. A missing screw can cause the chain brake to fail to operate, presenting a laceration hazard to consumers. **(800) 467-8445 or www.stihlusa.com.**

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission protects the public from unreasonable risks of injury or death from 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. To report a dangerous product or injury, call: CPSC's hotline at (800) 638-2772 or <http://www.cpsc.gov/talk.html>

Letters, Briefs, cont.

lesbian, bisexual or transgender mates. Our guest was married for 21 years and has four children. His wife came out in 1996. They have been divorced for two years and have a congenial relationship.

The Straight Spouse Network's mission is to expand visibility and increase support resources for straight spouses to lessen their trauma and help them rebuild broken lives after a loved one comes out.

Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays is here to promote the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families and friends through: support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity. Call 866-0511 for info.

WROC, the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition

WROC, the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition, likes to bring our community's attention to the date August 22nd because it is the anniversary of Washington's welfare reform program, Workfirst. While Workfirst itself is no cause to celebrate, WROC chooses this date as an opportunity to celebrate the important things the Workfirst program ignores, such as family, children, the importance of a single parent in their child's life, the right to education and the right to earn a living wage. Last year, WROC held Children First, an overnight vigil in Sylvester Park with music, poetry, fun and games. WROC members wanted to enjoy time with each other and their children while expressing to the Olympia community that many families have used up three years of their lifetime limit of welfare and we will see a lot more families camping in parks if welfare reform rules do not change to replace the safety net.

August 22nd., 2001 is the fourth anniversary of Workfirst and our state legislators have done nothing about the injustice of a five year limit on welfare. Thus, Workfirst continues to force parents into low wage jobs, while putting up barriers to education and other options that might improve their chances to leave poverty. Next August, many families will reach their lifetime limit and their welfare benefits will end. Most of these parents have very real barriers to work, such as special needs, or caring for their special needs child. Many of these parents are already working.

WROC hopes to hold Mamajam on August 22nd in Sylvester Park. We want to celebrate the hard work that mothers do, that is so often ignored, especially if those mothers are single and poor. We want to celebrate two parent families and single fathers as well, however households headed by a single mother comprise the majority of families living in poverty and receiving welfare. We hope Mamajam will offer the community a family event that will include music, poetry, crafts, massages, children's activities, good food and a chance to relax and enjoy time with your children and community members. However, none of this will happen without volunteers to help us turn our good ideas into reality. If you can help in any way, please call 352-9716.

WROC, the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition, holds a Planning and Organizing Meeting on the first Monday of every month. The next meeting is Monday, July 2nd at the First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion SE, the corner of Legion and Boundary. The meeting starts at 6:00 pm, but we have a potluck at 5:30. On-site child care is provided.

Your Help Is Needed

Because of the huge number of letters Books to Prisoners - Olympia Support Group receives each month and its limited resources, requests often wait many months to be filled. Thousands of letters still remain in boxes. Your help and generosity are urgently needed.

If we desire individuals in this country's prisons to be caring, thoughtful and sympathetic, then we too need to be caring, thoughtful and sympathetic. We need to "walk the talk." Please donate your time, money or books.

Inmates — All correspondence to Books to Prisoners *must* go through the main branch:
Books to Prisoners
Left Bank Books
92 Pike Street
Seattle WA 98101

Please donate:

- Any other good books
- Stamps and stamp money
- Money for tape, wrapping paper, and copying

Please bring donations of books to the Books to Prisoner at Olympia World News at 116 4th Ave in downtown Olympia

Please make checks payable to Books to Prisoners.

Hours: Currently, the business hours are from 9:00 am to 9:30 pm daily. Please call the message phone below and leave a message.

Address: Books to Prisoners
116 4th Ave, Olympia WA 98501

Message Phone: (360)943-2375

- Open drop in work/training sessions every Thurs. 3-9 pm in the back of Olympia World News. *Training takes 1 hour. Once you are trained you can work anytime we are open.*
- **BTP Volunteer Potluck** - 3rd Sat. of the month, 3 pm at 116 E. 4th Ave.
- **Save UPC code from Western Family Products &** send to B to P, 116 E 4th Ave, Olympia, WA 98501
- Shop at Bayview and Ralph's and use a special card and they'll donate $$ to BTP. Pick up your card at BTP now or call them and they'll mail one to you.

Get your very own poster!

Everyone Deserves a Fair Trial

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal

These are *the* authentic posters previously printed in the pages of *Works In Progress.*

*** 11 x17 for *Mumia***
*** 22 x 34 for *No War***
= Act now and get a 11x17 size *Stop The Sanctions on Iraq* poster absolutely free with purchase of *No War*

Send $1 for one or $1.50 for both to :

WIP PO Box 295 Olympia, WA 98507

(Sorry no COD's. Allow one week for delivery)

Get yours today!

NO WAR

(Garden, continued)

toes, strawberries, zucchinis, 2 apple trees, 1 pear tree, 1 hazelnut tree, crooknecked squash, winter squash, tomatillos, lupins, strawberries, rhubarb, rosemary, cauliflower, cabbage, mystery perennial vegetables, and a sign.

What is the plan for the garden's future?

The future of the garden is whatever the community makes it. Your question should be what do I want the garden to be. Some folks want it to be a community gathering space, where people can learn about growing food in the city, grow food for themselves and others, eat with friends and strangers, and meet new people.

What does the garden need?

What the garden needs most is for people to come and enjoy it, to play, eat, and plant; a community garden is not much with out a community. In addition, the garden could use any number of physical things, including: seeds, transplants, a bulletin board, signs, banners, tools, compost and other soil amendments, more garden beds, trails, tables, a tea station, berries, and basically anything else you would want in a community garden. Remember this is our garden, and we are responsible for making it what we want it to be by working on it, bringing stuff for it, and playing in it.

Can I come to the garden on days and times other than the work parties?

Feel Free to come by any time to prepare soil, transplant, sew seeds, make trails, or to do whatever inspires you.

Events at the Garden:

~~Every Sunday from 2pm-6pm- Work/~~ Play party and barbeque picnic/ potluck

July 14th at 12pm- native plant salvage and transplant workshop

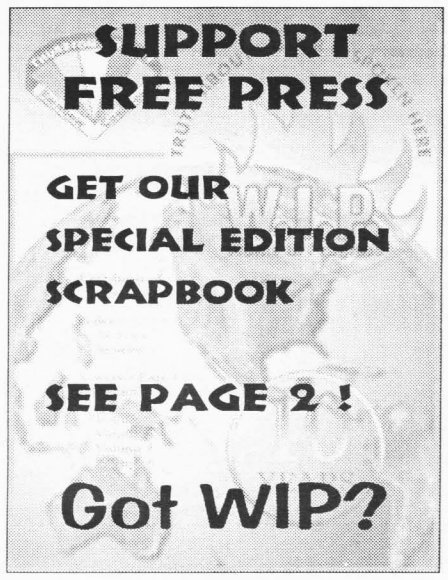
July 15th at 1 pm- planting by the moon

July 21st 2:00 pm - food not lawns: how to clear turf and prepare a garden bed

What does this all mean:

May day was all about breaking outside of the boundaries of our everyday lives. For some, the May Day Free Garden was about enacting beauty and life without compromising, without asking permission from forces (private property, state power) that we do not agree with. What has been spawned from this act are ends that are more compromised, but which will have more lasting effects.

I walked through the May Day garden yesterday. I saw plants that were growing out of the bulldozer tracks: sunflowers, trees, lettuces, and other vegetables strongly defying the fate imposed on them by greed.



TRUTH ABOUT POWER IS SPOKEN HERE

W.I.P.

WORKS IN PROGRESS

JULY 2001

FREE

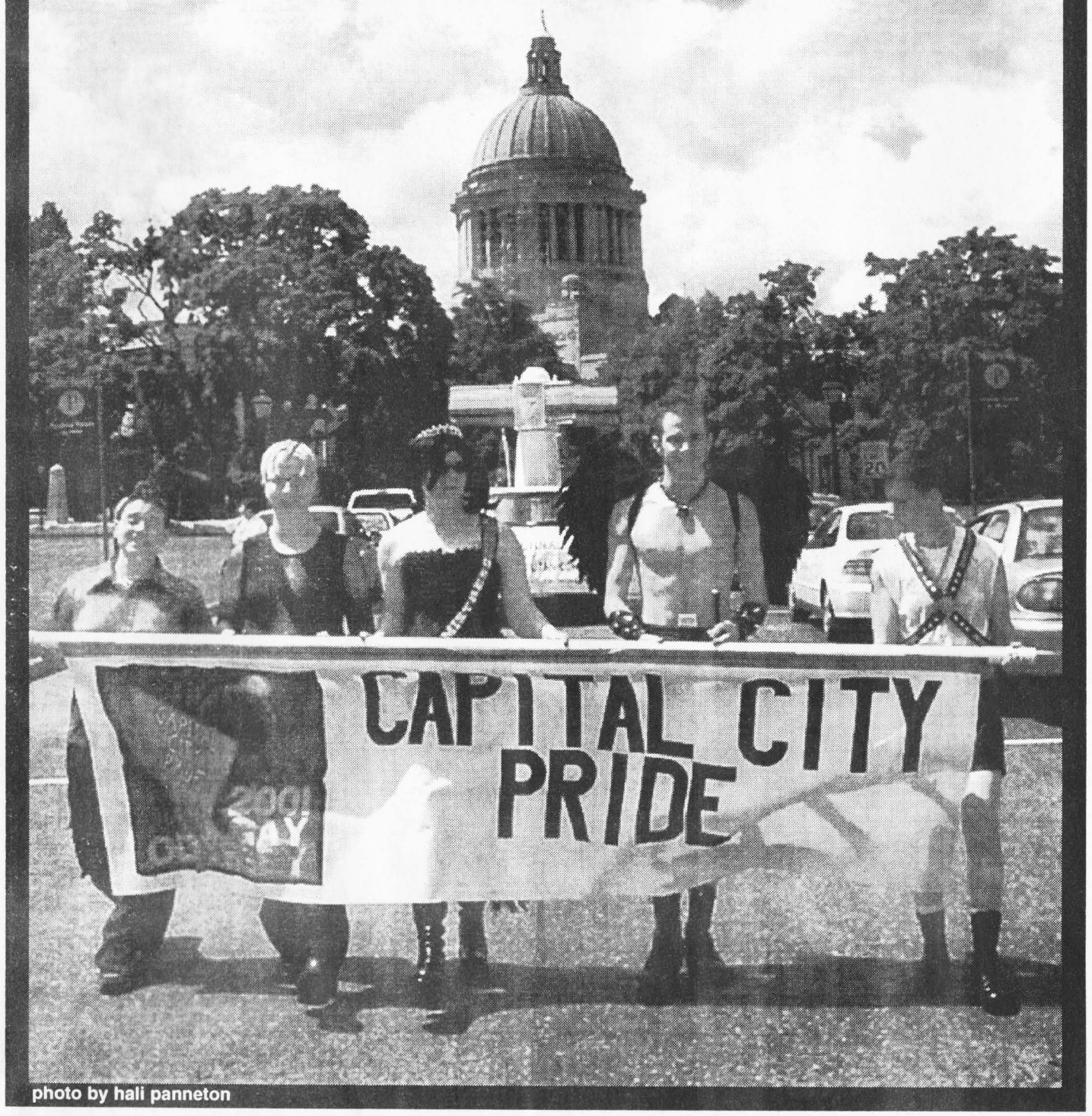


photo by hali panneton

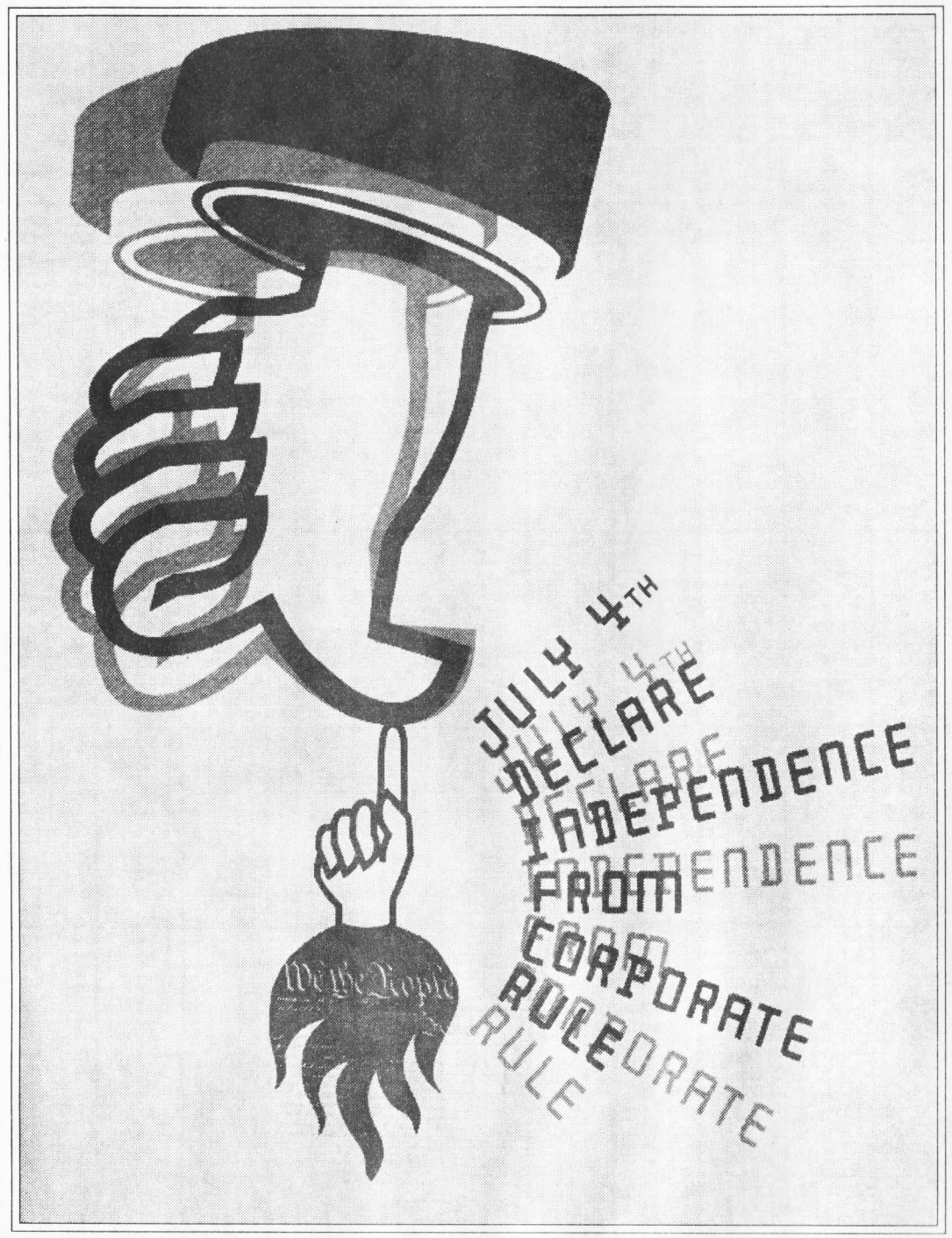
- 1 -
Free Garden Continues

- 5 -
Home Rule Charter
for Thurston County

- 7 -
Media, Democracy &
the Internet

- 9 -
Guthrie & Chaplin
This Land Is
Our Land

- 11 -
Back From Cuba



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